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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 03978

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
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SUBJECT: TFPM02: MEETING WITH SC PRESIDENT ON PANAMA

REF: STATE 403831

11. (CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT)

12. SUMMARY. AMB PICKERING MET WITH SC PRESIDENT (COLOMBIA) DEC 20 TO ASK THAT A LETTER SETTING FORTH THE REASONS FOR U.S. ACTIONS IN PANAMA AND A COPY OF PRESIDENT BUSH'S STATEMENT BE CIRCULATED AS OFFICIAL UN DOCUMENTS. PICKERING ALSO ARGUED AGAINST PREMATURE ACTION BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL, SUGGESTING THAT THE SC WAIT TO SEE WHAT ACTION THE OAS WOULD TAKE. END SUMMARY.

13. AMBS PICKERING AND WATSON, TOGETHER WITH POL AND LEGAL COUNSELORS, MET WITH SC PRESIDENT ENRIQUE PENALOSA (COLOMBIA) MORNING DEC 20. PICKERING DELIVERED TO PENALOSA COPIES OF PRESIDENT BUSH'S STATEMENT MADE 7:20AM DEC 20 AND A LETTER SETTING FORTH THE REASONS FOR U.S. ACTION IN PANAMA. HE ASKED THAT BOTH BE CIRCULATED AS OFFICIAL SC DOCUMENTS. PENALOSA AGREED.

14. PENALOSA SAID HE NEEDED U.S. ADVICE REGARDING THE NICARAGUAN REQUEST FOR AN IMMEDIATE MEETING OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. HIS OWN INCLINATION WOULD BE TO HOLD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL AT 11:00AM, THEN FOLLOW WITH AN OPEN MEETING WHERE THE U.S., THE NICARAGUANS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES DELEGATIONS COULD MAKE STATEMENTS. HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE THE COUNCIL TAKING ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION, BUT OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS THAT HE WOULD REMAIN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE MEMBERS, SEE HOW THE SITUATION DEVELOPS, AND DETERMINE IF A FURTHER MEETING AND ANY OTHER ACTION IS NECESSARY. PENALOSA ALSO SUGGESTED THAT MAYBE THE LATIN MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL COULD PREPARE A PROPOSAL. PICKERING INDICATED IT WAS PREMATURE TO CONSIDER SUCH AN APPROACH.

15. PICKERING STRESSED THAT IT IS IMPRACTICAL TO HAVE CONSULTATIONS OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL SO EARLY. A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS NEEDED TO BE CONSIDERED. HE SAID THE DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA HAD APPOINTED A NEW PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AND THAT HIS CREDENTIALS WOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE SYG VERY SHORTLY. THE U.S. FEELS STRONGLY THAT THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NORIEGA REGIME SHOULD NOT SPEAK IN THE COUNCIL AND THAT THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA SHOULD BE SEATED.

16. PICKERING ALSO SAID THAT THE OAS WAS CONSIDERING THE ISSUE. HE ARGUED THAT SINCE THE OAS IS THE REGIONAL FORUM FROM WHICH, UNDER ARTICLE 52 OF THE CHARTER, THE SECURITY COUNCIL SHOULD TAKE ITS LEAD. HE SUGGESTED THAT PENALOSA MAY WANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR AT THE OAS IN ORDER TO LEARN FOR HIMSELF WHAT STEPS THE OAS WAS PLANNING TO TAKE.

17. PICKERING CONCLUDED BY SUGGESTING THAT PENALOSA CONSULT WITH INTERESTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL BILATERALLY AND SCHEDULE ANOTHER MEETING WITH THE U.S. LATER IN THE DAY TO DISCUSS THE POSITIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL. PICKERING EMPHASIZED THAT IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO RUSH AHEAD WITH CONSULTATIONS OF THE WHOLE THIS MORNING.

18. PICKERING NOTED THAT PRESIDENT BUSH HAD SPOKEN BY TELEPHONE WITH PRESIDENT BARCO (WHO SAID HE WOULD TRY TO BE HELPFUL), PRIME MINISTERS MULRONEY AND THATCHER AND

OTHER LEADERS. HE ALSO SAID THAT PRELIMINARY REPORTS INDICATE THAT A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ARE READY TO RECOGNIZE THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

19. COMMENT. IN AN EFFORT TO DELAY SC CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUE AND ALLOW THE PERMREP OF THE DEMOCRATIC PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT TO PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS, USUN IS ATTEMPTING TO PROLONG THE PERIOD OF BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. AT OUR REQUEST, THE UK, FRENCH, AND CANADIAN DELEGATIONS HAVE ALSO REQUESTED BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SC PRESIDENT. END COMMENT.

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

PICKERING